

## Surfaces



# Hazard Adams's "Insiders and Outsiders" Roundtable Discussion

Hazard Adams, Ernst Behler, Hendrik Birus, Jacques Derrida, Wolfgang Iser, Murray Krieger, Hillis Miller, Ludwig Pfeiffer, Bill Readings, Ching-hsien Wang et Pauline Yu

Volume 6, 1996

DISCUSSIONS DU PREMIER CONGRÈS INTERNATIONAL SUR LE  
DISCOURS HUMANISTE  
DISCUSSIONS FROM THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
HUMANISTIC DISCOURSE

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1064844ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1064844ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

1188-2492 (imprimé)

1200-5320 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce document

Adams, H., Behler, E., Birus, H., Derrida, J., Iser, W., Krieger, M., Miller, H., Pfeiffer, L., Readings, B., Wang, C.-h. & Yu, P. (1996). Hazard Adams's "Insiders and Outsiders": Roundtable Discussion. *Surfaces*, 6.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1064844ar>

Résumé de l'article

Ces discussions autour du texte de Hazard Adams, « Insiders and Outsiders », ont eu lieu en avril 1994, dans le cadre du premier Congrès sur le Discours Humaniste. Les communications de cette première réunion du Congrès ont été publiées dans le volume 4 de *Surfaces* (1994).

Copyright © Hazard Adams, Ernst Behler, Hendrik Birus, Jacques Derrida, Wolfgang Iser, Murray Krieger, Hillis Miller, Ludwig Pfeiffer, Bill Readings, Ching-hsien Wang et Pauline Yu, 1996



Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-d'utilisation/>

**é**rudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

# Hazard Adams's "Insiders and Outsiders" Roundtable Discussion

Hazard Adams  
Ernst Behler  
Hendrick Birus  
Jacques Derrida  
Wolfgang Iser  
Murray Krieger  
Hillis Miller  
Ludwig Pfeiffer  
Bill Readings  
Ching-hsien Wang  
Pauline Yu

**Surfaces** Vol. VI.107 (v.1.0A - 15/08/1996) - ISSN:  
1188-2492

Copyright for texts published in **Surfaces** remains the property of authors. However, any further publication should be accompanied by an acknowledgement of **Surfaces** as the place of initial publication.

---

## ABSTRACT

This roundtable discussion of ["Insiders and Outsiders"](#), Hazard Adams's contribution to the first International Conference for Humanistic Discourses, was held in April, 1994. The papers of this first meeting of the ICHD have been published in volume 4 of *Surfaces* (1994).

## RÉSUMÉ

Ces discussions autour du texte de Hazard Adams, ["Insiders and Outsiders"](#), ont eu lieu en avril 1994, dans le cadre du premier Congrès sur le Discours Humaniste. Les communications de cette première réunion du

**Adams** : Well, as you can readily see, my discourse departs from the main line of the other papers in being less concerned with theoretical questions, though it certainly raises them in a very naive form. And it's more concerned with matters of practice and behavior, I think. Partly this is because I suspected that most papers would proceed at high levels of abstraction, and I thought I might then serve to bring in the antithetical, if only in the form of a little imagery. Partly also this is because I think the role of humanistic discourse is, on the whole, to do just that, relative to the dominant intellectual and cultural voices, which are those, more or less, of technology, and to do it within itself in the spirit of William Blake, who wrote to his patron Hayley, "Thy friendship has often made my heart to ache. Do be my enemy, for friendship's sake." Humanistic discourse may not always have had to play the antithetical role that it has or should have had for so long that we forget there was a time when the Celtic king kept a poet as a trusted advisor. My guess is that even then the advice was frequently antithetical, as in the jester's role. Two works for me document the change (if there was a change - and anyway it's a good story even if there wasn't, as Oscar Wilde would say). First, Thomas Gray's great poem "The Bard," which dramatizes the death of the last Welsh bard by suicide, all the other bards having been done in by King Edward. Second, W. B. Yeats's poet Seanchan in "The King's Threshold," cashiered from the corridors of power by King Conchubar, but subsequently the pyhrric victor in death from a hunger strike because his words remained to criticize the king. It's not just poets, but the discourses of the humanities which, driven from the courts of the world, exist in a position marginal, for the most part, to those courts. (I'm speaking principally of academic life.) On the other hand, perhaps it was always this way. If that is the case then, the humanities might well consider to what extent its habits and mores have been complicit in its marginalization, and how it might constitute a more effective antithetical role, enmity for friendship's sake, within the institution of academia. For I see little hope that it can ever gain the primary role, nor should it, for a utopia of poets is for me a terrifying thought. My paper raises up the humanistic principle of antithetical discourse, by which I simply mean the bringing in of positive opposition to the mutually

negating opposites in play, or rather no longer in play because already fixed. In this case, the negating opposition of insiders and outsiders, that is, the carrying of positive differences or contrarities into the discourse of the humanities themselves, even as they provide the necessary opposition by intelligent stealth, I think it must be to the idols of the technological tribes that dominate our universities with what Blake called "single vision and Newton's sleep." In this manner, the literary, I think, must be the fundamental force. It is in the identity of metaphor that difference and same co-exist. It is in the fiction that we project desire and repugnance. It's in the dramatic that we return from the abstract concept, necessarily fixed, to the living event. It is in the gesture that we declare ourselves free in our hope. These are potentially powerful antithetical forces for generating conversations, where we find things in ourselves, same and different, in the ethical sense. But we lack, perhaps, enough faith in them, and tend to denigrate their powers ourselves, even ape our opposites across the campus, allow their languages to dominate our behavior, and in the end trivialize ourselves when we do not engage the power of the technological university with a positive opposition. Merely expressing our own differences or teaching the differences (in Graff's phrase) will not be enough, for differences have a way of falling into deadlocks and must be redeemed by the infusion of new life. This has always been what the great teachers in the humanities have done, I think, and I look forward, therefore, to our next session with the hope for that infusion, where East meets West. But I hope the meeting turns out to be three cornered in some way.

**Pfeiffer** : Hazard Adams has said that his paper departs in some ways from the modes of some other papers, but I believe that it remains accessible to the operative modes of translatability which have been sketched here, and I would like to make that connection between the preceding paper of Wolfgang Iser and yours, Hazard, if you'll allow me that. On page seven in Wolfgang's paper there is a contrast between a mutual translatability of cultures, on the one hand (and this seemed to be a Kantian concept, more or less), which by far outstrips cross-cultural interchange in terms of assimilation, appropriation, and incorporation. And these concepts, I think, are more empirical concepts; even if they were not meant as such, I do take them to go more into the direction of how we normally conceive of empirical tendencies in the encounters of culture. I think that the paper of Hazard Adams starts from there, from certain forms of empirical encounters, but yet comes back to something like... not like Wolfgang's position, but

something which might approach the perspective there. Let me make a few remarks to that effect. I think the first point is that the use of the arts by the humanities or by humanistic discourses, as given in the examples you have used, could be described as lingering forms of self-endorsement. That is to say, the arts are used in, of course, antithetical ways, as forms of self-endorsement. That seems to be even true, in your perspective, for the aesthetic attitude. On the other hand then, you turn in the course of your paper, first on page five, and then on page seven, in my view, you turn back... you turn to some kind of (could I say?) concern. But the modes or the models you hint at are different from what Wolfgang has proposed. On page five, you talk about the outsider and insider in ways which might remind one of the position, for instance, of the parasite in Serre's term who is neither a complete outsider nor a complete insider, and who is also, I think, not contained, or may be contained - I don't know - in the notion of translatability laid out before. And finally, on page seven, you talk about certain forms of distance which might also elude the unpalatable opposition between the different forms of self-endorsement. And I think one could call this metaphorical notion of a certain distance a kind of third non-position. I would suggest that. And so that third position which you outlined, that's a kind of third something which does not yet develop into a position. That would have been an effort at... not at translation, but at mapping the relations of translatability between the two.

**Adams** : I would only say one thing, that the model (I'm not afraid to use the word), the model that I use is a fundamentally Blakean distinction between contraries and negations. But I won't bore you with going through that.

**Krieger** : First of all, I want to say that you have no right to suggest that this is not appropriate to the problems we were raising in this meeting. It seems to me that this paper, in important ways, foreshadows what we want to do next year. That is, what you've done is to give us a first and singular example of a relationship between something we might call a colonial culture and another culture, cultures that are distanced from one another much more than they are distanced geographically. The distance between England and Ireland is not very great, but obviously enormous, as you have it here. That is, the outsider is very much an outsider to the Irish situation, as the Irish conceive themselves in a colonialist relationship to the English literature surrounding them. And so that way you've given us a sort of pre-example of

the kind of issues that will be raised next year. Having said that, I want to raise one question only. That is, there seems to be almost a willingness to make one generalization, which is (if you are making it) troubling in some ways. Page five: "Will the insider's view be inevitably more political, activist - engaged? I suspect so." And then you go on to say, "in a postcolonial situation it is likely to be inspired by a political view that tends to reductive judgment." Then on the next page, joining on the other side: "I think [that] the outsider is more likely to view a writer in terms of the traditions of poetic making. By virtue of a certain distance the outsider is likely to treat Yeats as an innovative voice in a line of poetry as *techne*, as one who says things sayable best or perhaps only as poetry." And then you go on from there in your final page to define your third position, the Blakean alternative, as an alternative to the general notion that the insider is likely to be politically bent, the outsider likely to be formalist, "suspicious of local political reductions" on the one hand, "not content with an aestheticism that relaxes into a pure formalism" on the other hand.

**Adams** : Of course the whole thing is very hypothetical, a speculation meant to provoke.

**Krieger** : Yes.

**Adams** : I'm not sure it's true. I think it happens a lot of the time.

**Krieger** : Although you almost undercut your own statement farther down on page six, where you admit that one of the reasons you probably saw it this way was because you studied in the period of New Criticism, and so on. So the question is, is the outsider's view of Yeats, Joyce, and so on, always formalist, or is it that in the days of New Criticism and post-New Criticism, in the days of critical formalism in the English speaking world outside of Ireland, it was likely that that is the way any significant writer, any writer they viewed as significant, would be taken, namely as formalist. And if it's that, we can't help but note that these days, these days the outsider in the United States would hardly be likely to view either Yeats or Joyce, based on anything like a formalist reading. Quite the contrary. I just finished looking at a whole series of papers on the work of Joyce, and you couldn't be more political, from Vincent on down.

**Adams** : Yes, but I do say somewhere in the paper (I don't know where) that the situation entirely changes.

**Krieger** : Right, yes. And I wasn't arguing with the paper so much as wondering about whether there is anything at all to the opposition. Part of the force of the paper rests upon that opposition, the opposition between insider and outsider, political readings and formalist readings..

**Adams** : I threw it in deliberately because I think it's a good way to start talking about the issue, and to some extent I was influenced by Ching-hsien. He doesn't know this. But I do know to some extent what he thinks about Chinese poetry, and I know that he thinks a certain kind of way about it, and it seemed to me that it's a more or less formalist way of thinking about his own work.

**Krieger** : As an outsider, you mean.

**Adams** : But as an insider, and I was hoping that suddenly the whole thing would get reversed here and we'd talk the other way around about it. Or just get rid of the whole distinction.

**Krieger** : Is it possible in Ireland? Certainly, in the United States, Irish literature, including Yeats and Joyce, is taken almost exclusively politically today. And I was just wondering, is that the way the Irish are doing it, or maybe the insider/outsider opposition is not so great.

**Adams** : Well, I think what very frequently happens is that very thing, that one of those positions begins to gain domination and negates the other. That's why I think something has to be infused into the situation we presently have with respect to Irish literature at least. The study of Irish literature isn't going anywhere. The arguments are fixed, and no one is moving. What happened was that the political interests that were generated principally by the north/south problem generated a whole new group of writers and critics in Ireland who were highly politically motivated. And eventually, of course, that came over and dominated what was being said about these writers in this country.

**Krieger** : Recursive loop.

**Adams** : Part of the reason for that, incidentally, is that this is no longer a cottage industry. It is a big industry, and it has its own journals, and newspaper, and everything else. *The Irish Literary Supplement* is

published at Boston College, and it's edited by an Irishman, a displaced Irishman. So that what's happened is that the whole institutionalization of Irish studies had generated the domination of one of these two opposites I'm talking about. And I think anyone who reads through that material, as I have, and tries to get some sense out of it sees that it's a dead opposition.

**Readings** : I'd just like to say something, Hazard, on the question of industry, and in the spirit of debate, political criticism, I will declare that I am a member of an Anglo-Irish family, which has a considerable record of colonial oppression, so anything I say about Ireland should be taken with a pinch of salt.

**Adams** : My background is Welsh.

**Readings** : I want to pick up something you say on page four, where you say, "Yeats and Joyce began to be of economic interest to the... tourist industry." To me this is the most pregnant phrase in your paper, precisely because in thinking about that tourism, and the way in which, in contemporary society, a notion which I would call leisure (or translating, leisure)[ 1 ] has replaced an idea of culture. I'm talking now about the United States and about what happens with mass media developments. And I would like to ask you to talk more about what you think tourism does. Do you think tourism takes a cultural product and prosthetically, technologically sells it, or do you think it alters the structure of the question of culture in some fundamental way? Because I suspect the latter. We are of course very near to Disneyland, so one has to be careful what one says about these things, you know. I suspect that, in fact, the challenge to the humanities is very much implicit with the question of something like tourism, that if one is to talk about the humanities and their internationalization, the specter of the theme park looms, in a sense, larger than that of the armchair.

**Adams** : Well, it's such a big question that I can certainly declare that I'm incompetent to answer it. I'm trying to think whether tourism is a product of something else or not, and it's a messy matter because in Ireland, it seems to me that (I'll use that as an example) that there's something very disorganized and unexplainable, finally, about how these things actually occur. I think a few people get together and say, well, you know, we ought to celebrate William Butler Yeats, so they start a school in Sligo, of all places. And there are a bunch of people who begin by thinking, well, wouldn't it be nice to put Sligo's name on the map somehow? which



is one of the great motivations. But wouldn't it also be nice if all of us intellectuals got together and had a reason for getting together? And so what happens is that a certain little elitism, elite group starts to form a society around a figure who has a certain prestige. And that's sort of the way it happened. Then it caught on, and pretty soon it became a tourist industry in a small tourist industry, probably in spite of itself, certainly in spite of the hotel accommodations, certainly in spite of the people who are running it, certainly in spite of the efforts to keep it a small club by some. Funny about the Irish - - you know, they want to have the tourists, but they don't want either to have these people come in messing up their culture. So I don't know how to answer what you said.

**Readings** : Well, it seems to me very interesting. Last summer I went to the Joyce conference at Dublin, and it's very clear that the Joyce industry is feeding into the tourist industry. But, at the same time, the Joyce conference was run as a tourist jamboree for the academics who are feeding the tourist system. So something very strange is going on, and we have to wonder about Irish culture and the Celtic Twilight, and about the relationship between the invention of literature and its inscription into a landscape as the object of tourism. And here I go back to England and think about Wordsworth and the curious relationship between the desire to instill a landscape with some kind of appropriable symbolic meaning, and the way this works in tourism.

**Adams** : I might add that one of the major arguments over Yeats now is the attempt of the politically oriented critics to try to demolish the myth of the Celtic Twilight and the whole Yeatsian use of landscape, a complete rejection of that, which is also a rejection, at some level, of the whole question of nationalism.

**Krieger** : Actually, you raise an interesting comparison here. That is, is the use of the lake country Wordsworth business or tourism? I mean, without Wordsworth, no lake country, I suspect...

**Iser** : And it was in the travel section of *The L.A. Times* over the weekend.

**Krieger** : Yes it was! The view of Wordsworth's cottage was everywhere. What is the difference between that kind of exploitation and what you'll have in a post-colonial situation in Ireland: I mean, the relation of Yeats to the tourist, Yeats to Ireland to the tourist, or Joyce to

Ireland to the tourist, with the whole mess of Ireland politically, in its relations to us, in their relations to themselves (in contrast to the English) all of these essentially non-colonial. That's a sort of pure exploitation of a national hero, a national poet hero, whom probably none of the tourists read.

**Readings** : Last summer there was a huge scandal because the Northern Ireland Tourist Board produced a pilot brochure for tourist visits to the war-torn areas of Belfast. And there was a serious project by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to develop the troubles as an item of tourist industry. And I raise this not to say, oh, how terrible, but to say, what does it mean? How do we begin to develop the terms to think that?

**Krieger** : You would have to distinguish it from the Wordsworth situation, which has none of those problems in it, and yet the exploitation is not altogether dissimilar.

**Adams** : Well, let me add one thing that is purely, I think, an attempt to describe the difference between the Wordsworth situation and, let's say, the Yeats or Joyce's version. Most of what I'm talking about here that Bill picked up has to do with schools that get started in Ireland. There's a Yeats school, a summer school, a Synge summer school, a Joyce summer school, a Merriman summer school, and several others by now, I'm sure. The interesting thing about that to me is that it reflects a kind of Irish interest in conversation, in talk, which is not present in the Wordsworthian situation or anything else. The model, in other words, for all these things is a bunch of people getting together and talking. I don't know what more to say than that. But as I say, I think it has some importance.

**Pfeiffer** : I don't know where you're starting from or what Bill is asking for, but are we completely clear about the differences between the theme - did you say "theme park"? - and the armchair existence, or are we clear about the implications of the armchair existence for... I mean, it is a very nice phrase...

**Readings** : It's a procedure, not an existence.

**Pfeiffer** : Procedure, yes.

**Adams** : It doesn't work too well at Ireland because there is no armchair in Ireland. There's just the pub, or the snug. It's still a very very oral culture, it seems to me, in spite of all the writing that comes out of it.

**Krieger** : But that's more armchair than Wordsworth.

**Adams** : What about your theme park? Well, it isn't of course, but it has a social element to it that the armchair does not have. And that's very important in studying Irish literature. The oratorical aspects of it are just tremendously important.

**Derrida** : Just some minor remarks about this important question of tourism in literature. I have the bad habit of using the word "tourism" as an insult when I describe the philosopher or the theoretician who doesn't read texts. Well, that's tourism, which means superficial, and quick, and so on. I'm guilty of that. But in our case, what we should avoid in any case (and I keep to the insult), we should avoid doing tourism with the foreign cultures, that is, going too quickly, quick talking, conversation, and so on. That was not my point, in fact. The Joyce tourism, with the Joyce Symposium, doesn't occur only in Dublin. There is Joyce tourism in Frankfurt, [for instance]. I have been a witness to that.

**Miller** : The last one was here in Irvine, right here.

**Derrida** : Then, perhaps a more serious point. It would be interesting to study in parallel ways the history of the institution called literature, and the institution called tourism. Strictly speaking, it started in the eighteenth century. Stendhal, I think, coined the word "tourism." So tourism came a little after the origin of literature as such in the strict sense. And last, speaking of tourism, literature, and politics, an enormous example today would be Kafka. Kafka was totally silenced, prohibited during the totalitarian regime. You could not mention his name, it was censored. I remember when I was put in jail in Prague. I said, when I was interviewed by the police, they asked me, what are you doing here? Well, I'm writing an essay on Kafka, and I went to Kafka's house, and it didn't improve my situation. But now, nowadays, if you go to Prague, Kafka is everywhere, and the exploitation of Kafka is absolutely extraordinary. You can't come to the corner of a street without finding a plaque, an arrow, a museum, and Kafka was not even writing in Czech. He was of course a Czech German-speaking author, and of course the shift in power, the way now you can read Kafka and use it politically... It's not that I point to the problem. With him, we have an extraordinarily paradoxical example of a political crossing of politics, literature, and tourism, because it's not simply for political reasons that they exploit Kafka.

People come and spend dollars and marks with Kafka in Prague.

**Krieger** : I think Havel was put in prison in part because he was accused of being a Kafkan, in effect, in his writing.

**Readings** : In some sense, this would trouble that notion of positive opposition as something available through literature directly; it complicates that model, it seems to me, very very problematically. I'm not a Joyce expert, but it seems to me the story you've just told about Kafka could be backdated thirty years and told very strongly about Joyce. Not that Joyce was put in prison, but he's more or less considered as a transgressor. I'm thinking of the banning of certain things in *Dubliners*, the censoring of *Dubliners*, and then the sudden explosion of Joyce in Ireland.

**Adams** : I suspect it has different sources. I think it's fair to say probably that Joyce was forced on the Irish by international interests. I'm not sure that's the case with Kafka.

**Miller** : You say that in your paper, that they, the Irish, were embarrassed about him as an anti-Catholic, and so on.

**Adams** : Yes, there's always been a strange love/hate relationship there, but Joyce's reputation was made in France and America, as far as I can tell. But that's neither here nor there.

**Krieger** : What was your point, Bill?

**Readings** : The philosophical determination of tourism becomes very difficult, and the oppositional claim for literature becomes almost untenable or at least utterly complicated by this kind of intertwining.

**Adams** : Well, only on one level, it seems to me. To read Kafka is not the same as being a tourist in Prague, looking at Kafka places.

**Derrida** : Yes, I understand what you mean, but nevertheless, since modern tourism belongs to what one calls, at least in France, the culture industry - it's industrial - then the conceptual opposition between literature as purely literature, and cultural industry is difficult. Although I share your concern, it's conceptually difficult to draw the line, in the same way as the line between, let's say, literary images and technology. I

understand what you mean, but at some point, there is some *techné* within the very literary process.

**Krieger** : Can the Irish swallow Joyce now, forced upon them, without being in some ways transformed into accommodating him and giving his subversive elements some force in their society?

**Adams** : Oh, I think there's no question that that has happened. Ireland is a small country, and so I don't know how you can generalize to a large country from it, but it seems to me that Joyce is one of the forces that has changed the relation between church and state, and I don't know to what extent we can claim that, but I think it's true.

**Pfeiffer** : Is it possible that what you are driving at is that the implementation or the institutionalization of both literature and tourism indicates a kind of disruption of other cultural patterns, other cultural traditions? Printed literature in some forms, and tourism might be very different of course, maybe polar opposite forms of the same overall development.

**Krieger** : But then it doesn't undermine the argument.

**Adams** : Yes, but my argument would be that any specific literary work, say, like *Dubliners* or *Ulysses*, if you return to it to read it, it becomes again antithetical to whatever it was that was made from it.

**Readings** : I don't want to drive this into the ground, but let me just give you a very quick example. One of the ur-texts of cultural studies is Raymond Williams' *The Idea of a Common Culture*, in which he speaks of a culture writing itself into the landscape, and he's talking of your Welsh forbearers. And this is clearly identified as something which Williams will call "resistance to culture." All I'm trying to say is that that kind of claim for something like a culture as resistant and as oppositional has no place in tourism. Or what worries me is that that metaphors of writing one's way into the landscape as the site of a cultural resistance to a political technocratic society, is something that gets troubled, undermined by tourism. And one of the things, I think, that your group has to do is to engage the philosophical determination of tourism.

**Adams** : There are two points I'd like to make about it. One, I think you're right. What happened in Ireland was that Yeats's attempt to write the landscape of Ireland was certainly, in its original impulse, I think, an oppositional effort. It was anti-colonialist, an attempt to

give the Irish some sense of nationality, and all of those things. That is almost totally resisted now. The myth got created and began to have, from the point of view of someone like Seamus Deane, so much power that it became oppressive, and became oppressive particularly because of its nationalistic, in his view, its nationalistic attitude. Then it became the fixity that had to be attacked, so what happened was that the writing of that landscape became the villain. Well, what happened, of course, was that they looked around, the critics looked around, for a poet who would oppose that Yeatsian landscape. They came up with Patrick Kavanagh. Now in my view, Kavanagh isn't a quarter the poet Yeats is. However, he is the more influential poet among young Irish poets. And what's the argument on behalf of him? Oh, he tells it like it is. But that too is cyclical. You know, his landscape is the real landscape, not the Yeatsian landscape. Well, it isn't the real landscape either. So that we have what amounts to, what appears to be a sort of cyclical situation operating there. I can't remember the second point. It'll come back in a minute.

**Behler** : I don't know whether my remark is still relevant, since the discussion has moved on, and the remark was meant for an earlier moment. I had the impression that we were giving the outsider too bad a name when we related him to tourism. My impression from your paper is that the outsider, in this case American criticism, had an enormous function for Yeats and Joyce. And that is, in my opinion, only one example, because there are entire trends of literature which live through the outsider. I think of Kierkegaard, for instance, and how his own country treated him, or in earlier periods, Cervantes, Calderon, and entire traditions of literature which lived through the outsider. I'm not talking cross-culturally. I'm talking about the inner European exchange. Who can claim to be an insider to literature? We are all outsiders in a certain way, and I think the function of the outsider is very important. Think of the writing of national literatures without outsiders. I can give you interesting examples of nineteenth-century German histories of literature and their formation of the canon. It is necessary to have the outside perspective. This is what I wanted to say. This is how I had understood your paper. In a certain way, we are all outsiders. The function of the outsider is absolutely necessary in a field like literature. A discipline like comparative literature wouldn't exist without the outsider and the insider exchange.

**Adams** : Yes. My paper makes just one very simple point, and that is in part what you said, that any

situation of criticism, I think, requires both insiders and outsiders and always historically has them anyway, so it doesn't make any difference. But that isn't sufficient, and there has to be something more than that, which is unfortunately always going to be located somewhere, as we all know. And it isn't there in order to negate the inside/outside opposition. It's there to just positively oppose it, I think, and perform an additional conversation, and this seems to me an endless process.

**Krieger** : But I think there is some more - forgive me - - potentially universal notion embedded here in your discussion, if we're very careful about it. If we think, especially in a colonial situation of an oppressed society, about those persons who are themselves so enmeshed in the immediate political realities that they face day by day and struggle against, and then the different kinds who are not directly the recipients of the political turmoil, of the political oppression, and so on. And I think we can identify at least two kinds of responses. On the one hand, let's say, those formalist American and French writers of the high modernist days, who created Joyce and Yeats as great figures. But on the other hand, I think of the early days of Spanish departments in this country responding to Latin American literature, and treating it as a colonial literature that clearly, with a few exceptions, was not taken as being good literature and taken to be second-class writers for the most part. Borges might come up, and that would be all right because Borges would satisfy the criteria that Joyce, and Yeats, and Kafka, and so on lead us to bring. But many many Latin American writers looked upon by the outsider from a colonialist perspective are not taken seriously.

**Yu** : And now look at the departments. They don't even teach literature.

**Krieger** : So you can have the outsider who is contemptuous, representing the colonial power looking at the conquered peoples. Or you can have those few colonials who, for a variety of historical accidents, found themselves in a formalist, modernist tradition that formalists quote "aesthetically" at least. But in one way or another, they would disentangle these exceptions from the indigenous struggles within the national culture of the conquered person.

**Behler** : I did not speak cross-culturally, but I meant it, because there again the outsider can have an important function. I didn't want to say it so directly right away.

**Krieger** : So the disentanglement from the indigenous struggles either can leave contempt, in which case what the person writes will be of no significant interest, except as an example of how imperialism works. Or it can be of great interest because perhaps there's a capacity to see something special though, from inside the struggle, the individual writer cannot be seen except in terms of the struggle.

**Adams** : Then you have a further complexity. Your example doesn't quite cover it, but that's the case of Conrad on Africa and Achebe on Conrad on Africa, where one has to ask who's the insider and who's the outsider. And the need, the absolute need for other voices to be heard, I think that's the most important thing about that whole debate (which I'm sure you're aware of - it is a very nasty one); the need for other voices is what I'm talking about here.

**Miller** : I wanted to return briefly to tourism, but in a slightly different perspective. I think one of the ways you can identify the different roles that literature has within a given culture is the role of tourism, literary tourism. I mean, there are other kinds of tourism... A Disney theme park doesn't have very much to do with literature in the sense that we think of it, but I was thinking, in this country, of the importance given to literary biography, as opposed to literary criticism. If I write a biography of Dickens, or of Joyce, or of a minor author, let's say, if you'll allow me to use that word, however good or bad it is, it will get reviewed in *The New York Times*. A terrific book, written by somebody on Dickens, let's say, *The New York Times* treats it if it doesn't exist. That's a cultural phenomenon here that I think is very important. However, it's counter-related to another strange fact about the United States, and that is that we have no piety about the places associated with our authors. I remember how surprised I was in Baltimore when Albert Béguin came to visit Georges Poulet years and years ago, and what did he want to do? He wanted to see the grave of Edgar Allan Poe.

**Miller** : I lived for nineteen years in Baltimore. I never visited the Poe grave. I love Edgar Allan Poe. He's very important to me. I lived in New Haven, Connecticut for fourteen years. I never went to seek out Wallace Stevens' place, where he lived in Hartford, or Mark Twain's house. Both of those are authors I very much care about. Whereas when I was in the People's Republic of China, it was considered to be extremely important to take me a long way to see the grave of Confucius. Because it's not



nearby, it took quite a lot of doing to do this. In Moscow, the thing that I found amazing about our friends there, both in St. Petersburg (it was still Leningrad, I guess, then), and in Moscow, was the complete similarity between their attitude towards real historical places and places that were fictional. When we took the train to Leningrad, they said, "This is where Anna Karenina committed suicide." When we got to Leningrad, they said, "Here is where Pushkin came back after the duel, where he died." And then a few hundred yards away, "This is where one of the characters in one of his short stories jumped into the canal." For these people, these two things were on exactly the same plane of existence, and of enormous importance. That is to say, Moscow's marked for them still by fictional locations... In St. Petersburg we were shown where Dostoyevsky was lined up to be not shot (in a fake execution) before they sent him to Siberia. Those are the places that matter to them. This defines the ways literature exists for those different cultures, and they are very different from ours.

**Krieger** : Remember the piety around the Tolstoy house?

**Miller** : The same thing...

**Krieger** : But such piety! Everybody in the Tolstoy house was a religious Tolstoyan. I mean they worshipped him and *his* piety.

**Miller** : And that just doesn't exist in this country.

**Iser** : Unless you go to Williamsburg, and are being pointed out the famous pole which figured in a particular movie; since then people have been going there in order to see it. Thus there is a similar attitude adopted toward an 'unreality' because the pole was put there so that it could be shot for the movie concerned.

**Adams** : ... with our attitude toward the past.

**Krieger** : But Williamsburg is something special. It's set aside.

**Adams** : But I want to tell a story here. It goes along with what Hillis was saying because it's the more extreme example of the story. You've probably heard it, Hillis, because Hugh Kenner tells it. It's a story that he tells about going to the Joyce meeting in Dublin several years ago, not the most recent one, and he was going to look at seven Eccles Street, so he went to Eccles Street, and of course the door is no longer there. It's in Bailey's

Restaurant. So he was looking around for the address, and he finally found it, and he was looking at it. An old woman was standing beside him, and he said, "This is where the Blooms lived, isn't it?" And she said, "No, that's not where the Blooms lived. They were very nice people. They lived down the road..."

**Readings** : I think that the question of history comes in here. One of your compatriots, Max Gallo, recently remarked (and I'm quoting - this is sight translation), "In Europe, if you dig in the ground, you come up with a fragment of a statue. In America, you scratch the ground and you come up with a bison skull," and this was his denigration of the United States. As the object of a bi-cultural marriage, one of the strangest I've noticed is that when I drive around in Europe with my wife, I annoy her by keeping up a continual running commentary on where we are and what happened here. This is the site of this. Whereas, of course, in America, one drives for miles and nothing is said. And I think, there, the question of landscape comes back in the fact that America is built upon the massacres. Of course, what you would actually find is the skull of a Native American, as it were, if you scratched the ground, but finding a bison instead locates it within an ecological system.

**Krieger** : Well, there is a lot of business around Walden Pond, however.

**Readings** : But what I'm trying to say is that we're talking about a kind of topography, which is something important to do with the grounding of a culture, literature, and history. It's very strange, and in some ways it's becoming more apparent. Thus the fictional aspect, of course, such as the actual building of a fictional house where he could have lived, becomes an essential feature. It seems to me the lesson of this is that one cannot talk about culture and humanities aside from some kind of strange work of inscription that is not simply the archeological finding of what was originally there. That model doesn't work anymore: one is not simply digging up something, a culture that has been lost and brought back, but that one is writing. The writing of culture is this kind of topographical inscription which is figural and figurally infected.

**Pfeiffer** : In the capacity I am sitting here, I would ask both Hillis and Hazard of whether what you described, Hillis, with respect to, let's say, Russia would conform to that, let's say, bad notion of tourism for which Jacques apologized. Or is that in fact something going in the direction Bill was?

**Miller** : Yes, I think, from an American point of view, why did I not go to the tomb of Edgar Allan Poe? Because I thought it was irrelevant to my understanding of Poe's literature. And I'm apologizing too because I think that there may be some false idealizing here, that it's a very strong feature, I think, of the American sense of literature that visiting a place has no relationship to it. That's a certain attitude toward literature, which is just the reverse of the Russian one, where we were told that every household has its set of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, that it was the one way they kept themselves alive during the bad times of communism, and so on. And they did this in part by making these sacred places. I think Bill is right. We don't have sacred places in this country in that same way, and partly because we're trying to obliterate something. Just a few more miles away from New Haven, in the Quinnipiu Marsh over there, is a place where a whole tribe of Native Americans - women, children, the rest - were massacred. There's no sign, no monument for that event - except the Native American place name.

**Krieger** : Wolfgang, you mentioned what we saw in *The L.A. Times* last Sunday. Can you imagine a similar article on going to see the world of Hawthorne in Salem, and so on and so on?

**Adams** : Oh, yes.

**Yu** : *The House of Seven Gables*.

**Adams** : *The House of Seven Gables* is one of the attractions. How does this square with the thing you began with, which was the emphasis upon literary biography and the tremendous interest in it?

**Miller** : I said it was a contradiction. I have no ability at this point to relate those, because I think it's equally the case that in the media and journalism here, biography is much more important than reading the literature. You read about the author, you don't read the author.

**Adams** : But at the same time, I think that maybe *you* don't go to see the grave of Poe, and you don't do literary biography...

**Birus** : I'm surprised that you made such a sharply cut opposition between American and, let's say, European way of dealing with it, because one of the most important examples of American art for me, beyond the literature, the composer Charles Ives is but the contrary

bias. For instance, his Piano Sonata Nr. 2 *Concord, Mass., 1840-1860* has four movements entitled *Emerson, Hawthorne, The Alcotts, and Thoreau*. And as I had to give a lecture in Harvard and brought with me as a gift this *Concord Sonata*, my host said: "Why don't we go to that place?" And so I realized: "it's really a topographical music dealing with these persons and their ambiance." And Ives had written *Four essays Before a Sonata*, explaining also these references. And being there at Walden's Pond, I realized, why there are some bars with an additional flute in the last movement of the Sonata.

**Miller** : Let me say two things. One, your reaction, I think, to the Ives piece is a very European one. It's certainly not an important work in American culture. Ives is a very special interest. But... Sure, you and I know that. The second thing... But most people don't - he's too difficult, and so on. He doesn't even have the panache that, say, Mahler does. For every person who listens to Mahler... every hundred people who listen to Mahler's Ninth, there may be one who listens to Ives. The second thing you say is that Ives strikes me as interesting because (if I may dare to use this word) he's deconstructing that tradition. When "Yankee Doodle" appears in one of his pieces, something very funny happens to "Yankee Doodle," so that there's an irony... and "irony" is even a weak word... a kind of savage irony...

**Birus** : A very mixed irony in all the variations of the song *America*.

**Miller** : ... which is why you and I like it, but it doesn't exactly make it patriotic in the normal sense.

**Birus** : No, no, no. But topographical.

**Miller** : It is marvelous topographical, and literarily situated.

**Krieger** : Of course, if we're talking about the discourses of the arts in general, we have to recognize what happens with Frank Lloyd Wright in this country, where there are structures built by Wright that are now places of worship about Wright. I mean, shrines like Talaison West in Arizona, or Spring Green I think it is called in Wisconsin. It's easy to understand why they function this way, because Wright's entire ideology, architectural ideology, becomes that of his worshippers, these students of students of students. And it's a very closed circle. It's very much the kind of thing you mentioned with Joyce. They all insist that Wright's

architecture organically grows out of the earth which sponsors it, and they have a whole structure of discourse to justify the peculiarities of every stone, all of the stones coming out of the ground. You can't import anything; it has to be right there, locked into the ground. You hear all of these notions, and for them the physical location is part of the work of art, or it creates the very possibility of this particular work of art. So to that extent, Wright's places are treated with great topographical precision, with discussions of the mountains, and how they relate to what the light was doing, and so on and so on. Of course it's architecture; it's a physical thing, and therefore has an immediate relationship to its surroundings. But again, it's a tremendous sponsor of tourism. I had to wait hours to be able to get a shuttle that would take us to there, and finally gave up and rented a car to do it, because they were just so full that when you got there you had to wait forever to get in. It was the height of the season, as they say. I mean, I don't think there's any tourist place in America dedicated to anything related to the arts that is more heavily transformed into tourism than that, and most of the people standing around were just tourists in both the senses - both Jacques' sense and the more traditional sense.

**Derrida** : About tourism, since we have opened a new field, a new dimension in our space. Tourism is an important dimension, I think, for many reasons. First, coming back to Poe, when I tried to visit (it was the first time I was lecturing in the States), something related to Poe--it wasn't his grave, but his house, and, at the time, Poe's house was in a black neighborhood, which meant that the taxi driver, who was white, didn't want to take me to the house. And he left me at the border of the neighborhood, and I had to go walking to the city hall and ask for someone black to take me to the house with a key. So a man took me underground, having the key of Poe's house, and opened the house for me. So Poe was totally imprisoned in this barrio, and in this allegory (let me treat this as a metonymy or an allegory)... We should pay attention to the destiny, the fate of some authors, some works, who have totally different histories according to the nation... Poe is not the same Poe for the Americans and for the French. And though they have a little house... So there are different approaches to the same work, the same language. And then, Hillis was referring to the example of newspapers, and so on and so forth. Speaking of Russia, what, let's say, opened, or democratized Russia? It was not only the arrival of a number of tourists who were bringing new images, new models, but the media, the tv. So what crosses the

border is not only the tourists, but the tv image. And now the question would be, what about literature... in that case? That is, the way literature is carried through this media - tv, film, and so on, literary programs. For instance, in France, they have what I consider a very bad literary program, but a program which all the country watches. I suffer when I look at this... I know that in the States or anywhere else you don't have such a literary program.

**Readings** : These programs are carried on our cable channels and are those my colleagues are most likely to have seen.

**Derrida** : And I know that CUNY, they use these programs in the university to teach French literature and culture. So we have two, let's say, translations, literature to radio and tv, and then these tv programs, literary programs back to the academy. So we have a number of trajectories which are new.

**Krieger** : In this country you get all kinds of advertisements of different videos that you should rent for your class, or the whole Shakespeare canon done on PBS (done originally on BBC) and all available. There are, in the catalogue, endless numbers of poems, plays, dramatizations of novels. You can see *Adam Bede* as done on PBS one week and *Pride and Prejudice* on the next, and so on. Yes, these are all translations that create cross-cultural connections. But these are all touristic.

**Derrida** : Yes, but however bad they may look to us, we cannot deny that they open an access to an enormous population...

**Krieger** : Except they destroy the text because there's no reading involved.

**Derrida** : That's why it's so difficult, that's why it's so difficult. You cannot deny that without that, a number of people - let's say, ninety percent of the population - - wouldn't even know of their existence.

**Pfeiffer** : Do they destroy *toute l'écriture* or only some important forms of *écriture*?

**Krieger** : I remember hearing students, undergraduates here, say, "Have you read such and such a novel or seen the movie?"

**Adams** : Well, you now have novels that are being based on movies. But the fact of the matter is that many more people read fiction than ever before.

**Krieger** : You mean the *Schindler's List* phenomenon. It leads the booklists for months now.

**Adams** : It has a result, I think, of a return to reading a certain way that was totally unexpected.

**Derrida** : When I discussed it with one of my French publishers, I said, well, this program is disgusting. And this man, who is a distinguished reader of literature, said, "Well, no, no, no, no, no. It helps. It helps. It makes the people buy books they wouldn't buy otherwise. You shouldn't be so condescending."

**Krieger** : Jacques, what do you make of this? This is a question you cannot answer, but it's a wonderfully curious question. It begins when I had a very young son. When my son was very young, I remember the movie *Lord Jim* was being put on tv, this awful thing with Peter O'Toole, and I remember worrying about his seeing it because then I felt he could never read it. I mean, that book is a very important book to me. I'd written on it, thought about it, it opened up all kinds of things. And I thought once he saw this, he could never read the book as a free person. All the images would be preformed. He could never create his own cast of characters, his own actions. He could never follow anything. It was all prescribed by the film. What is the reading experience of someone who has first seen a film before, and then reads the book after the film to check on whether the film was an accurate transcription?

**Derrida** : It depends on the person, on the context. For some, it's the end. They won't read the book.

**Krieger** : No, I mean, if they read it, what do they conceive?

**Derrida** : Your son may, without forgetting the film, have an access to the book.

**Pfeiffer** : Has he read it meanwhile?

**Krieger** : Yes, he says the film was lousy.

**Pfeiffer** : See, that's the result.

**Birus** : But Goethe describes a similar experience, that his first encounter with the Bible was a wonderfully illustrated Bible, and so Moses and all these persons he knew by these [copper] plates, these engravings...

**Krieger** : He knew what they looked like.

**Birus** : But this way you describe it as an opposition - - here this lousy movie, and there the freedom to encounter this novel as such.

**Krieger** : I think I would really like to see some empirical data on tests of persons who have or haven't seen movies before reading books.

**Readings** : What's the name of the American comedian? Fritz Schpiegel, I think, but I'm not sure. The radio or the theatre of the mind arguments. He's a very famous sort of radio comedian who, when television first arrived, produced a whole series of programs called "The Theatre of the Mind," denouncing television because it didn't give the free range to the imagination, and so on, that radio did. And I just want to say, well, yes, I'm sure that for people who are a very small squashed sliver of society, this may possibly be true, but I mean, it seems clear that--sorry Fritz--tv has totally replaced radio as a form of symbolic life.

**Krieger** : Hillis and I know a distinguished Shakespearean who will not see a play of Shakespeare's come hell or high water. And by the way, this has long been in the background of the great debates between theatre people who talk Shakespeare, and literary people who won't recognize the theatrical dimension.

**Miller** : Calderwood is a New Critical person, for whom Shakespeare is the words on the page. You could say the other thing, Murray, and that is that the text of *Lord Jim* does a lot of prescribing too, and that the movie is freer in the sense that it frees you from the coercion of the narrator I mean, one of the things that's essentially left out is the narrative commentary, which is very hard to carry over from one to the other. You and I know it's essential to the book, but you could argue that it's guiding my way of understanding those mental images that I create. I'm looking forward next week to seeing *Middlemarch* (which is one of my novel - I've been reading it for thirty or forty years), partly because I want to see what in the world they can do with what for me is the main part of *Middlemarch*, namely, the narrator.



**Krieger** : Oh, I think for you to see *Middlemarch* now is a wonderful, wonderful idea.

**Iser** : It will be a letdown Hillis, because the images in the film are fixed, whereas in reading you have so many opportunities of making these pictures yourself.

**Krieger** : And you of all people who read the way you do, with language doing all the things that are not so fixed. I mean, all the instabilities that you write about. I mean, there's much less instability in the filmed vision of a particular character.

**Miller** : It gives me some leeway, but no, I have a very specific notion about that, and that is that they are two different things. One of them may be or may not be interesting. The fact that one is based on the other doesn't mean you shouldn't read them both together, but you really have to interpret both of them... In the movie version of *Howard's End*, now, you have subtleties, and sophistications, and interests, and so on, that are not there in the book.

**Krieger** : Oh, I agree.

**Miller** : That doesn't make it better or worse. It's just different.

**Krieger** : I was only talking about what happens to the reading, to the character of the reading experience, of the person. You know it's two different things. I know it's two different things. They may not.

**Miller** : No, I don't think you're constrained so much by either one of them. That is, I don't think it necessarily prohibits you from reading the book without remembering those movie images. Though I must say that whenever I read *Great Expectations*, I see Joan Greenwood leaning out of her window and saying, "What name, please?" "Pumblechook." - which is in the book, but for me it's Joan Greenwood as Estella.

**Wang** : I'm thinking that we really have to go back to the issue of the insiders versus outsiders a little bit more, because that points to the way we will do research in future, how to bring people from the two sides to work together to find a new, revised discipline. And, then, what I see in Hazard's observation about the study of Irish literature is also very true in some cases in modern Chinese literature. There are some very good writers who are ignored by the Chinese, some for political

reasons, for example, for their collaboration with the Japanese during the war. While Chinese scholars don't want to treat them, the outsiders, American scholars and European scholars, will study them, and then will provide us with more information about, and a better understanding of, these writers who are refused at home for political reasons. So I can be mad if someone, an insider, uses too much politics to talk about an author, but I'm also not very happy if someone, an outsider in this case, studies Chinese poetry simply for pure aestheticism. I like to have some kind of a balance between the two. And so, in a sense, if I were to become a scholar or interpreter of Irish literature, I think of course I would also want to know the Irish attitude toward certain authors, to begin with, and why. And I would also want to equip myself with a knowledge of Irish history and culture, and the political situations in which they wrote. Moreover, I could also offer what I had accumulated from my speciality in Chinese criticism, through which I would attempt to give new different interpretations of the Irish authors.

**Adams** : Well, I certainly think that all those things are necessary to any serious scholarly effort, any serious interpretive effort. And what struck me about the Irish situation was how bifurcated things had become, and how difficult it was to try to get into a position where one wasn't captured by either one of these fixed attitudes. That's really what I was troubled by.

**Wang** : I'd like to give one example. Yeats writes so much about how one gets old, or something like that. While I understand why it is a worry for him, I do not see it as really a problem, not in Chinese literature. So, in a sense, you can say that I cannot ultimately understand Yeats' worry about age or how to substitute the physical decay with something else, such as "wisdom."

**Krieger** : So it's translatable within cultures related to Yeats's, but less translatable further away.

**Wang** : Yes, but I'd really have to work very hard in order to become a student of Irish literature in order to write correctly about the issue. But I could also say that Yeats is silly, you know if Chinese poets don't worry about it, why does he have to worry?

**Derrida** : Tell me, do you really mean that in Chinese culture ...

**Yu** : everybody writes about getting old.

**Wang** : Yes, it's about the fact that time will not allow you to accomplish that many things you have planned accomplish because now you are getting old.

**Adams** : But this is a wonderful example of a translation problem, in a way, because Yeats's treatment of the problem of aging is contextualized in a whole set of other things which are, to some extent, Irish. So the tone of it is very hard to capture, I think, if you try to do it in some other language.

**Miller** : It's also the case with Yeats that he, back in the 'nineties when he was not an old man, he already was imagining himself as infinitely old.

**Adams** : Well, he says, "When I look back on my poetry, I realize that my poetry has gotten younger while I've gotten older." So you know, there's a very interesting sort of pride in that, which is not quite the same thing as fear of old age or death.

**Miller** : His early poetry sounds like it was written by somebody ninety years old, and he was a young man.

**Derrida** : What I had in mind in asking such a question wasn't the existential common anxiety about getting old. It's the fact that aging is becoming today a physical obsession. There is something about the way we experience aging, so I'm sure that between different cultures, the different approaches or experiences of age, is something we have to take seriously. I'm sure that fundamentally there is some anxiety about getting old in Chinese, but probably of a different kind, the same way as Yeats was probably writing about it in an Irish context. So aging is not a natural experience.

**Yu** : I think the poems about getting older--it's true, there are lots of them, but it's as much a convention as any other. You start writing about it when you're twenty years old... You start writing about getting old when you're twenty years old, and you just keep writing it. And I guess one of the main differences, probably, is that if you lament old age, it's not that you really want to be young again. I mean, there isn't the counterweight of youth, you know, that's so powerful here, you know... I mean, look at the politics of China and what the minimum average age is for leadership.

**Adams** : Why are Yeats's early poems so old? One of the reasons is that they're dedicated to the myth of the Celtic Twilight, which is a nostalgic notion. And the whole mythology of it is the bringing back of an earlier

age, and the fact that that age had died out, and so forth and so on, whereas the late poetry takes an entirely different kind of attitude toward even that earlier Yeats. And the lamentations, not lamentations, but the comments about death in those later poems are tempered a great deal by enormous vigor, oppositional vigor toward what Yeats sees as the condition of contemporary Irish culture.

**Krieger** : And I think we can't overemphasize Pauline's point about too much of this being the result of literary tradition. The poems about aging are with us from the beginning of the English lyric. In the early Renaissance, one of the major themes is a theme of transience, that somehow the paper will last after I'm gone and so on, and the sonnet tradition always insisting on the transitory character of "Let my love with my life decay," and so on. In Shakespeare again and again, everywhere. Keats, of course, is a late one recapitulating that tradition, but the tradition is everywhere. As you ask, how much of this has to do with a common Western anxiety about aging, and how much of it is a literary convention?

**Iser** : I would like to make two points. If a location is conspicuous for topographical and for literary references, the literary reference usually comes under erasure. Example: when visiting the well of Arethusa in Sicily, the guide pointed out to me the marvel that there is a fresh water well so near the salt water of the Mediterranean. When I mentioned the mythological and literary references, the guide looked at me in amazement and said: "Oh, you must be a German high school teacher".

**Miller** : That's interesting.

**Iser** : The other point relates to outsider/insider. We are currently inclined to say that the outsider (not in Hazard's paper, because Hazard portrays the outsider as a rather benign person), is considered the imperialist or the intruder, who makes inroads into societies or cultures. But if I look at British culture, it's different. It was Hippolyte Taine who prefaced his History of English literature by saying that English literature had the most permanent continuity of all European literatures. It drew a severe reaction from English scholars because a Frenchman dared to write on British literature. There is a prevailing attitude in culture as well to ward off whatever outsiders want to bring to bear. When I was in England writing a book on Walter Pater. I was told that I would never understand him as I was not British-born.

This is a perspective which may not be as dominant as the one which holds up the outsider as the imperialist. However I keep asking myself whether the outsider is really considered to be the benign person, and I would assume that something similar may apply to Chinese culture.

**Krieger** : The story you're outlining, the narrative you're telling, really outlines the struggles of early American criticism, through the nineteenth century especially, where you have the great struggle between those who, though Americans, were called Englishmen in disguise (and that was basically the Cambridge folks, Lowell and Longfellow)...

**Iser** : This holds true nowadays as well, when Stanley Cavell says, "We have to build America against the sand".

**Krieger** : Yes, and on the other side, you had the tradition of Walt Whitman in the nineteenth century, which is the tradition of the American Adam, the New Jerusalem, that which is a bulwark against the invader. It's a post-colonial, a self-conscious creation of a national literature, which will never be created so long as these damn Coleridgeans, like Poe and others, keep trying to import German and English culture and literary criticism into this country's ways of writing.

**Miller** : That view is not absent from Harold Bloom, who will say over and over again, we don't need the French, we don't need the Germans. We have Kenneth Burke, et cetera. And something very strong is meant by that. His tendency is to interpret the twentieth-century Wallace Stevens in terms of Walt Whitman rather than in terms of Wordsworth - for political reasons.

**Yu** : The recognition, on the part of Chinese scholarship, of any outside scholarship is very belated and very grudging. There is the tourism report on American sinology, you know, what's going on in American sinology every ten years or so. And it was reflected in my own parents, my parents' own response to my desire to study Chinese literature - as an outsider. What possible function could I have, you know, writing about Chinese literature in the United States. And finally, my mother had to talk to all her friends and try to figure out what she was going to do with this daughter who was going to do something so silly, and she finally decided (I think one of her friends said, "Well look, you know, she can translate" - translate Chinese literature... not just translate, you know, actually translate, but actually try to

explain something about Chinese literature to people in the United States). And she was able, a little bit, to understand, but it was still something that didn't make any sense at all.

**Iser** : Would it mean that a strong culture is inclined to repel the outsider who wants to make a statement concerning this culture; whereas with regard to Ireland, the outsider is considered to be more benign because he/she is a mediator?

**Adams** : Well, I think that my paper says that the Irish perception of the outsider is that the outsider is not benign. The Irish, at least in the earlier part of my career, always thought of American scholars coming over there as colonialists. In other words, their model of someone speaking English was based on England, their view of the English. And so they easily translated that over into American behavior, which the Americans helped by raiding for all the possible manuscripts they could and taking them to the University of Texas.

**Krieger** : But they never saw the Americans as fellow sufferers who had freed themselves.

**Adams** : No, I don't think so. My sense is that they sort of grouped everybody outside as having designs on them, and they have a long history of thinking that's true.

**Miller** : But you were saying, if I understood you, that American, particularly United States scholars, were in a way saving Yeats and Joyce from the Irish...

**Adams** : Yes.

**Miller** : ... the Irish people who would say, Silly Willy, about Yeats, that was the end of him.

**Adams** : Specifically complicated in the Irish case because of the Anglo-Irish/Catholic-Irish opposition, Yeats always being identified with the Anglo-Irish, and deliberately in his later years trying to foment that, even at his own expense. So it's complicated by that fact. And of course, the problem of Joyce was there, so that they found themselves at war with their own writers. It goes back to the same kind of worry about the outsider. People make themselves outsiders in a sense, by their connection with either Protestantism, Anglo-Catholicism, or whatever.

**Birus** : I think it's a quite interesting trait of Goethe's conception of the emerging world literature that it's not only a kind of free trade between different literatures, but that it reflects the role of persons like Carlyle and the German Romantic translators (to cut back also to translatability). And Goethe said, well, we are now in a period where it's possible that a foreigner like Carlyle has a better understanding of Schiller than anybody in Germany. And on the other hand, that the dealing of the German Romantics with Shakespeare in some respects was closer to Shakespeare than what was written at that time in England about him. World literature gives a chance, not only for a kind of reconciliation between nations. Goethe didn't over-estimate this role, but he believed in a small pacifying effect. But on the other hand, that emerging world literature gives a chance to sharpen the differences inside the national literatures, and also to give perspectives on these literatures that show what is common between fighting literary parties. For instance, Classicists and Romanticists in Italy: from outside, both look very Italian. But therefore you need the outsider. And I think that is an interesting point that the outsider, in some respect, can be the real insider because he is really inside the literary questions. So he can often isolate the problems that are really important, and that will survive as problems for the next generation.

**Krieger** : And of course, that's what literature traditionally, from it's founding as a discipline in this country, thinks it can do (whether it can or not), and you do have especially rich rewards if you're dealing with an international style. I mean, if you think of comparative literature dealing with the baroque in poetry, where they can read across Spain, Italy, France, and England, where you have certain kinds of internationalisms in style, then we don't know how good the insider/outsider is, but we may need the outsider to remind the Spanish historian that Gongora is a brother, in some ways, of Donne.

**Birus** : But that was not Goethe's perspective. He dealt with Carlyle writing a biography of Schiller - not comparing Schiller with anybody, but that he, from outside, could find striving points. And where German critics were fixed at the opposition of Romanticism and Classicism, he had a real insight - not a comparative point of view - into the position of Schiller because he looked from outside on the panorama of German literature.

**Krieger** : Of course many English readers think of Carlyle as really German.

**Birus** : That's your problem.

**Miller** : No, I certainly wouldn't. But he was lucky that he lived in Edinburgh. There was this boat that came over from Hamburg every week and brought German books. That's why the knowledge of German culture in Scotland at that time is so much better than in England.

**Iser** : And Carlyle had a considerable impact on Emerson.

**Miller** : But by way of Carlyle, yes, sure.

**Iser** : Yes, yes.

**Birus** : And in Munich there was no ship from Hamburg, bringing German books.

**Miller** : That's right, that's right. He was that close. That was a geographical fact, and that's how Carlyle got his books. De Quincey too.

**Pfeiffer** : But does it amount to the hermeneutic position of Gadamer that always makes possible the dialogue of the spirits above the turmoil of all the other cultural noise?

**Pfeiffer** : The problem of positioning, I think, with respect to what appears, what appears as culture or cultures, including literature, has become surprisingly more difficult now, I think. If we conceive of literature, for instance, as a unique or relatively unique *écriture*, then the question of tourism is maybe not easy to solve, but takes some definite shape. If, on the other hand, we think of literature also as, in itself, not just one *écriture*, but maybe different media, then I guess the tourist question, in a more complex media situation, takes on a different shape. That's my impression anyway, for the time being. I'm sorry - there was one aspect coming up between both Murray and Hazard and Ching-hsien, I think, namely the cultural relativity of the aesthetic attitude which tied in with the cultural relativity of interpretation (I think, interpretation as an operation, as a procedure, in your sense, is certainly a trans-cultural procedure). But my question: how this kind of operation takes place in different cultures is not a transcultural affair, and that is what we have to talk about at some point, I think.



**Krieger** : We ought to remind ourselves, by the way, to look into Louis Marin's essay on Disneyland, which is a wonderful mark of tourism, cross-culture, translation. Marin's a semiotic reading of Disneyland.

---

## NOTES

1. The first "leisure" is the British pronunciation with a short "e" sound, and the second parenthetical version is the American with the long "e" sound.

---

[Accueil Surfaces](#) | [Table des matières](#) | [Recherche Surfaces Home Page](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Search](#)

[PUM](#) | [Livres](#) | [Revue](#) | [Publications électroniques](#) | [Vente et distribution](#)

---